**Name : Sean Dunphy**

**Article:** “Distinguishing the Essential from the Important: Using Research to Strengthen the Use of Standards for Administrator and Licensure Programs”

* What were the key points highlighted in the article?
* There is a high degree of correlation between the presence and consistent application of critical principal knowledge, skills, and attitudes and student achievement.
* Based on extensive research, the absence of effective leadership can and will affect student achievement negatively.
* The degree or “order” of change (as determined by the effect it has on those closest to the change) determines the leveraging effect of different subsets of the critical leadership responsibilities.
* Without support, commitment, and resources to facilitate the development and mastery of these leadership responsibilities, significant changes in student achievement will not be consistently realized.
* Review the crosswalk of McRel’s work. What is the correlation between the crosswalk, the article, and the Iowa Standards for School Leaders?

It is apparent that each of the identified leadership responsibilities in the McRel document finds a “home” in the ISSL. As the article points out, effect sizes are determined by order of change and situational differences, but focused improvement on all 21 (or all 6 ISSL for that matter) is essential and foundational. I find it interesting that the factors with highest effect sizes in the McRel work are repeated and weaved within several of the ISSL. For example, Input (with an effect size of .30) can be found in ISSL Standard 1 (“in collaboration with others”), Standard 2 (“promotes collaboration with all stakeholders”), Standard 4 (“by promoting shared responsibility”), Standard 5 (“is respectful of divergent opinions”), and Standard 6 (“collaborates with service providers”). This is repeated with Culture, Communication, etc.

Working the other direction, it is also quite clear that the expectations laid out for administrators by the ISSL are well-grounded in the McRel research. For example, within Standard 2 alone, it could be argued that nearly every Leadership Responsibility can be found as embedded or at least implied. That is to say that in order to effectively promote a “Culture of Learning”, a principal would successful only to the extent that he/she could apply Knowledge of CIA, be an Optimizer, leverage habits of Intellectual Stimulation, provide support as a Change Agent, have skills necessary to Monitor & Evaluate, and so on down the line.

As a building principal, it is source of optimism to have such a focus for growth and increased efficacy. On the other hand, it is also makes the task that much more daunting…

* What are the pluses and minuses of focusing *daily* on the standards and the leadership responsibilities in your work with your building administrators?

The path to increased student achievement and improved leadership is clearly outlined by the materials from McRel, the ISSL, and the foundational research in systems change. The practicing administrator must acknowledge that in a very significant way, the success with which he/she fulfills that role directly determines the overall achievement level of the school. Therefore, focus on the ISSL and the Leadership Responsibilities are a moral imperative, to be sure.

That being said, it would take systemic and organizational support for a principal to achieve and maintain a laser focus on those responsibilities. The daily workings and managerial responsibilities confound the leadership efforts of the best of us. Without a way to glean through the standards and responsibilities, to reflect on strengths and weaknesses, and to engage in a step-wise action plan of improvement, any administrator would quickly find themselves swamped and overwhelmed. So much so that little or no growth would occur.

The professional growth model and growth goal plans that Iowa uses can be the source of direction. While all of the responsibilities are important, focusing on the few or one that is most leveraging for the situation that a principal or building is in can help alleviate a scattered approach and provide ways for the administrator to habitualize those responsibilities into the daily routine.